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Spring 4-16-2020

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Beros, Lynsey, "Nurses for Newborns – Incorporating an Occupational Therapy Perspective in its Work with Women and Families in the Perinatal Period" (2020). *OTD Capstone Projects*. 25.
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Nurses for Newborns – Incorporating an Occupational Therapy Perspective in its Work with Women and Families in the Perinatal Period

Lynsey Beros, OTDS

Faculty Mentor: Elena Wong Espiritu, OTD, OTR/L, BCPR

Expert Mentor: Gloria Morrison, BSN, RN

Nurses for Newborns

- Nurses for Newborns is a nonprofit organization that provides in-home nursing services to infants and families who face medical, social, and/or environmental risks.
- Services include health assessments and screens for mother and baby, plan of action creation, in-home visits, caregiver education, and referrals for external resources.

Mission & Vision

- Mission: “Nurses for Newborns provides a safety net for families most at-risk in order to prevent infant mortality, child abuse and neglect by providing in-home nursing visits which promote healthcare, education, and positive parenting skills.”
- Vision: “Families of all babies will receive the healthcare, education and support they need so that every baby will be healthy, safe and nurtured in their home and able to fulfill their full potential.”

Population Served

- Populations served include infants who are medically fragile, caregivers with physical or cognitive disabilities or with mental health concerns, and parents aged 19 years or younger.
- Clients are referred either prenatally or postpartum by healthcare providers, social workers, case managers, or other social services providers.

Literature Review

- Because occupational therapy in the field of perinatal care is an emerging practice area, scholarly literature that is directly related is scarce.
- When considering serving women and families in the perinatal period, OTs can address all areas of occupation impacted during pregnancy, childbirth, and the recovery processes.
- “Occupational therapy practitioners can also address occupational performance challenges of early motherhood, including the complexities of establishing healthy roles, routines, and coping strategies.” ^{1, 2, 4}

Role of OT in Perinatal Care

- Physical health: pain management, pelvic health, prevention/treatment of repetitive stress injuries
- Psychosocial health: perinatal mood disorders such as postpartum depression, postpartum anxiety, and postpartum psychosis, maternal and child attachment
- Wellness: habits and routines, roles and transitions, intimacy, participation in meaningful activities
- Parenting/Education: co-occupations (e.g. breastfeeding, changing diapers, child development, sleep routines, parenting groups). ³



Goals for Project

- Conduct a needs assessment with stakeholders
- Complete a review of the literature related to population and common needs to be addressed to inform needs assessment and project development
- Review current prenatal and postpartum educational folders and create additional educational materials related to occupational therapy while using an occupational therapy approach

Outcomes

- Through needs assessment (i.e. pre-survey), determined priority for educational materials relating to ergonomics, home environment, prevention of repetitive stress injuries, and return-to-work.
- Created and gathered educational materials to be added to educational folders for clients on the overarching topics listed above.
- Created a PowerPoint presentation to assist new hires on addressing these topics with clients.
- Post-survey showed improvement in nurses’ familiarity with OT, role of OT in perinatal care, and confidence in educating clients on overarching topics listed above.

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to my Expert Mentor, Gloria, and the Nurses for Newborns staff for allowing me to complete this project with you all. Thank you to my Faculty Mentor, Dr. Espiritu, for your assistance throughout this process.

References Available Upon Request